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Indian affairs. Letter from the Secretary of War, addressed to Mr. Schenck, Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, transmitting a report by Colonel Parker on Indian Affairs

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INDIAN AFFAIRS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

ADDRESSED TO

*Mr. Schenck, chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, transmitting a report by Colonel Parker on Indian affairs.*

JANUARY 30, 1867.—Ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington City, January 25, 1867.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a report on Indian affairs, prepared by Colonel Parker, aide-de-camp, for the information of your committee.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

EDWIN M. STANTON,  
*Secretary of War.*

Hon. R. C. SCHENCK,  
*Chairman of Military Committee House of Representatives.*

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*Washington, D. C., January 24, 1867.*

GENERAL: In compliance with your request, I have the honor to submit the following proposed plan for the establishment of a permanent and perpetual peace, and for settling all matters of differences between the United States and the various Indian tribes.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. S. PARKER,  
*Colonel and Aide-de-Camp.*

General U. S. GRANT,  
*Commanding armies of the United States.*

*First.* The retransfer of the Indian bureau from the Interior Department back to the War Department, or military branch of the government, where it originally belonged, until within the last few years.

The condition and disposition of all the Indians west of the Mississippi river, as developed in consequence of the great and rapid influx of immigration by reason of the discovery of the precious metals throughout the entire west, ren-

ders it of the utmost importance that military supervision should be extended over the Indians. Treaties have been made with a very large number of the tribes, and generally reservations have been provided as homes for them. Agents appointed from civil life have generally been provided to protect their lives and property, and to attend to the prompt and faithful observance of treaty stipulations. But as the hardy pioneer and adventurous miner advanced into the inhospitable regions occupied by the Indians, in search of the precious metals, they found no rights possessed by the Indians that they were bound to respect. The faith of treaties solemnly entered into were totally disregarded, and Indian territory wantonly violated. If any tribe remonstrated against the violation of their natural and treaty rights, members of the tribe were inhumanly shot down and the whole treated as mere dogs. Retaliation generally followed, and bloody Indian wars have been the consequence, costing many lives and much treasure. In all troubles arising in this manner the civil agents have been totally powerless to avert the consequences, and, when too late, the military have been called in to protect the whites and punish the Indians, when if, in the beginning, the military had had the supervision of the Indians, their rights would not have been improperly molested, or, if disturbed in their quietude by any lawless whites, a prompt and summary check to any further aggressions could have been given. In cases where the government promises the Indians the peaceable and quiet possession of a reservation, and precious metals are discovered or found to exist upon it, the military alone can give the Indians the needed protection and keep the adventurous miner from encroaching upon the Indians until the government has come to some understanding with them. In such cases the civil agent is absolutely powerless.

Most of Indian treaties contain stipulations for the payment annually to Indians of annuities, either in money or goods, or both, and agents are appointed to make these payments whenever government furnishes them the means. I know of no reason why officers of the army could not make all these payments as well as civilians. The expense of agencies would be saved, and, I think, the Indians would be more honestly dealt by. An officer's honor and interest is at stake, and impels him to discharge his duty honestly and faithfully, while civil agents have none of those incentives, the ruling passion with them being generally to avoid all trouble and responsibility, and to make as much money as possible out of their offices.

In the retransfer of this bureau I would provide for the complete abolishment of the system of Indian traders, which, in my opinion, is a great evil to Indian communities. I would make government the purchaser of all articles usually brought in by Indians, giving them a fair equivalent for the same in money or goods at cost prices. In this way it would be an easy matter to regulate the sale or issue of arms and ammunition to Indians, a question which of late has agitated the minds of the civil and military authorities. If the entry of large numbers of Indians to any military post is objectionable, it can easily be arranged that only limited numbers shall be admitted daily.

By an act approved March 16, 1802, it was made the duty of military agents "to purchase, receive, and forward to their proper destination all military stores and other articles for the troops in their respective departments, and all goods and annuities for the Indians, which they may be directed to purchase, or which shall be ordered into their care by the Department of War." In the retransfer of the Indian bureau, this act, so far as it relates to the Indians, could be revived, as well as the act of June 30, 1834, which authorizes "the President to require any military officer of the United States to execute the duties of Indian agent."

With reference to the discontinuance of the present Indian trading system, the arguments set forth in President Jefferson's confidential message, dated January 18, 1803, seem more cogent now than at that time. He says: "The

Indian tribes residing within the limits of the United States have, for a considerable time, been growing more and more uneasy at the constant diminution of the territory they occupy, although effected by their own voluntary sales; and the policy has long been gaining strength with them of refusing absolutely all further sales on any conditions; insomuch that at this time it hazards their friendship and excites dangerous jealousies and perturbations in their minds to make any overture for the purchase of the smallest portions of their land. A very few tribes only are not yet obstinately in these dispositions. In order peaceably to counteract this policy of theirs, and to provide an extension of territory which the rapid increase of our numbers will call for, two measures are deemed expedient: First, to encourage them to abandon hunting, to apply to the raising stock, to agriculture, and domestic manufactures, and thereby prove to themselves that less land and labor will maintain them in this better than in their former mode of living. The extensive forests necessary in the hunting life will then become useless, and they will see the advantage in exchanging them for the means of improving their farms and of increasing their domestic comforts. Secondly, to multiply trading-houses among them, and place within their reach those things which will contribute more to their domestic comfort than the possession of extensive but uncultivated wilds. Experience and reflection will develop to them the wisdom of exchanging what they can spare and we want for what we can spare and they want. In leading them thus to agriculture, to manufactures, and civilization, in bringing together their and our settlements, and in preparing them ultimately to participate in the benefits of our government, I trust and believe we are acting for their greatest good. At these trading-houses we have pursued the principles of the act of Congress which directs that the commerce shall be carried on liberally, and requires only that the capital stock shall not be diminished. We consequently undersell private traders, foreign and domestic; drive them from the competition, and thus, with the good will of the Indians, rid ourselves of a description of men who are constantly endeavoring to excite in the Indian mind suspicions, fears, and irritations towards us. A letter now enclosed, shows the effect of our competition on the operations of the traders, while the Indians, perceiving the advantage of purchasing from us, are soliciting generally our establishment of trading-houses among them."

The Indian department has increased to such magnitude since this was written that every argument advanced has a tenfold more force than at that date. And had the policy then advocated been adopted and steadily pursued to this day, there is no doubt that great good would have resulted, bloody wars been averted, and many valuable lives saved. It is believed that a return now to the wise and humane measures advocated by the fathers of the republic would still result beneficially to the government and the Indian races. Some definite and permanent policy should be adopted, and circumstances made to bend to its establishment.

In 1793 General Washington, then President, remarks in a special message to Congress, that "next to a vigorous execution of justice on the violators of peace, the establishment of commerce with the Indian nations, on behalf of the United States, is most likely to conciliate their attachment. But it ought to be conducted without fraud, without extortion, with constant and plentiful supplies; with a ready market for the commodities of the Indians, and a stated price for what they give in payment and receive in exchange. Individuals will not pursue such a traffic unless they be allured by the hope of profit; but it will be enough for the United States to be reimbursed only."

It is greatly to be regretted that this beneficent and humane policy had not been adhered to, for it is a fact not to be denied, that at this day Indian trading licenses are very much sought after, and when once obtained, although it may be for a limited period, the lucky possessor is considered as having already made his fortune. The eagerness also with which Indian agencies are sought

after, and large fortunes made by the agents in a few years, notwithstanding the inadequate salary given, is presumptive evidence of frauds against the Indians and the government.

Many other reasons might be suggested why the Indian department should altogether be under military control, but a familiar knowledge of the practical workings of the present system would seem to be the most convincing proofs of the propriety of the measure. It is pretty generally advocated by those most familiar with our Indian relations, and so far as I know, the Indians themselves desire it. Civil officers are not usually respected by the tribes, but they fear and regard the military, and will submit to their counsels, advice, and dictation, when they would not listen to a civil agent.

*Second.* The next measure I would suggest is the passage by Congress of a plan of territorial government for the Indians, as was submitted last winter, or a similar one. When once passed, it should remain upon the statute books as the permanent and settled policy of the government. The boundaries of the Indian territory or territories should be well defined by metes and bounds, and should remain inviolate from settlement by any except Indians and government employés.

The subject of the improvement and civilization of the Indians, and the maintenance of peaceful relations with them, has engaged the serious consideration of every administration since the birth of the American republic; and, if I recollect aright, President Jefferson was the first to inaugurate the policy of the removal of the Indians from the States to the country west of the Mississippi; and President Monroe, in furtherance of this policy, recommended that the Indians be concentrated, as far as was practicable, and civil governments established for them, with schools for every branch of instruction in literature and the arts of civilized life. The plan of removal was adopted as the policy of the government, and, by treaty stipulations, affirmed by Congress; lands were set apart for tribes removing into the western wilds, and the faith of a great nation pledged that the homes selected by the Indians should be and remain their homes forever, unmolested by the hand of the grasping and avaricious white man; and, in some cases, the government promised that the Indian homes and lands should never be incorporated within the limits of any new State that might be organized. How the pledges so solemnly given and the promises made were kept, the history of the western country can tell. It is presumed that humanity dictated the original policy of the removal and concentration of the Indians in the west to save them from threatened extinction. But to-day, by reason of the immense augmentation of the American population, and the extension of their settlements throughout the entire west, covering both slopes of the Rocky mountains, the Indian races are more seriously threatened with a speedy extermination than ever before in the history of the country. And, however much such a deplorable result might be wished for by some, it seems to me that the honor of a Christian nation and every sentiment of humanity dictate that no pains be spared to avert such an appalling calamity befalling a portion of the human race. The establishment of all the Indians upon any one territory is perhaps impracticable, but numbers of them can, without doubt, be consolidated in separate districts of country, and the same system of government made to apply to each. By the concentration of tribes, although in several and separate districts, government can more readily control them and more economically press and carry out plans for their improvement and civilization, and a better field be offered for philanthropic aid and Christian instruction. Some system of this kind has, at different periods in the history of our government, been put forward, but never successfully put into execution. A renewal of the attempt, with proper aids, it seems to me cannot fail of success.

*Third.* The passage by Congress of an act authorizing the appointment of an inspection board, or commission, to hold office during good behavior, or until

the necessity for their services is terminated by the completion of the retransfer of the Indian bureau to the War Department. It shall be the duty of this board to examine the accounts of the several agencies, see that every cent due the Indians is paid to them promptly as may be promised in treaties, and that proper and suitable goods and implements of agriculture are delivered to them, when such articles are due; to make semi-annual reports, with such suggestions as, in their judgment, might seem necessary to the perfect establishment of a permanent and friendly feeling between the people of the United States and the Indians.

This commission could undoubtedly be dispensed with in a few years, but the results of their labors might be very important and beneficial, not only in supervising and promptly checking the delinquencies of incompetent and dishonest agents, but it would be a most convincing proof to the Indians' mind that the government was disposed to deal honestly and fairly by them. Such a commission might, indeed, be rendered wholly unnecessary if Congress would consent to the next and fourth proposition which I submit in this plan.

*Fourth.* The passage of an act authorizing the appointment of a permanent Indian commission, to be a mixed commission, composed of such white men as possessed in a large degree the confidence of their country, and a number of the most reputable educated Indians, selected from different tribes. The entire commission might be composed of ten members, and, if deemed advisable, might be divided so that five could operate north and five south of a given line, but both to be governed by the same general instructions, and impressing upon the Indians the same line of governmental policy. It shall be made their duty to visit all the Indian tribes within the limits of the United States, whether, to do this, it requires three, five, or ten years. They shall hold talks with them, setting forth the great benefits that would result to them from a permanent peace with the whites, from their abandonment of their nomadic mode of life, and adopting agricultural and pastoral pursuits, and the habits and modes of civilized communities. Under the directions of the President the commission shall explain to the various tribes the advantages of their consolidation upon some common territory, over which Congress shall have extended the ægis of good, wise, and wholesome laws for their protection and perpetuation. It would be wise to convince the Indians of the great power and number of the whites; that they cover the whole land, to the north, south, east, and west of them. I believe they could easily understand that although this country was once wholly inhabited by Indians, the tribes, and many of them once powerful, who occupied the countries now constituting the States east of the Mississippi, have, one by one, been exterminated in their abortive attempts to stem the western march of civilization.

They could probably be made to comprehend that the waves of population and civilization are upon every side of them; that it is too strong for them to resist; and that, unless they fall in with the current of destiny as it rolls and surges around them, they must succumb and be annihilated by its overwhelming force. In consequence of the gradual extinction of the Indian races, and the failure of almost every plan heretofore attempted for the amelioration of their condition, and the prolongation of their national existence, and also because they will not abandon their savage tastes and propensities, it has of late years become somewhat common, not only for the press, but in the speeches of men of intelligence, and some occupying high and responsible positions, to advocate the policy of their immediate and absolute extermination. Such a proposition, so revolting to every sense of humanity and Christianity, it seems to me, could not for one moment be entertained by any enlightened nation. On the contrary, the honor of the national character and the dictates of a sound policy, guided by the principles of religion and philanthropy, would urge the adoption of a system to avert the extinction of a people, however unenlightened they



may be. The American government can never adopt the policy of a total extermination of the Indian race within her limits, numbering, perhaps, less than four hundred thousand, without a cost of untold treasure and lives of her people, besides exposing herself to the abhorrence and censure of the entire civilized world.

The commission shall assure the tribes that the white man does not want the Indian exterminated from the face of the earth, but will live with him as good neighbors, in peace and quiet. The value of maintaining friendly and brotherly relations among themselves is to be urged upon the tribes, and its continual discussion to be made one of the permanent duties of the commission. They are also to urge constantly the propriety, necessity, and benefit to result from their concentration in certain districts of the country, there to live peaceably as members of the same family, as brothers and friends having the same interests and the same destiny. I am free to admit that the most difficult task for the commission would be to obtain the consent of the Indians to consolidate, by removing into certain defined districts. But by constantly keeping the subject before them, and by yearly visitations, the wisdom and humanity of the policy would gradually develop in the Indian mind, and one by one the tribes would come into the measure, and the whole policy be adopted. There would be very many prejudices to combat and overcome. As members of the great human family, they know and feel that they are endowed with certain rights. They possess fair intellectual faculties. They entertain the most ardent love for the largest liberty and independence. Originally their greatest desire was to be left undisturbed by the overflowing white population that was quietly but surely pressing to overwhelm them, and they have been powerless to divert or stem the current of events. They saw their hunting grounds and fisheries disappear before them. They have been reduced to limits too narrow for the hunter state, and naturally many of them at times have sought by violence the redress of what they conceived to be great and heinous wrongs against their natural rights. Though ignorant, in the common acceptance of the term, they are a proud people, and quickly resent the least suspicion of dictation in the government of their actions, come from what quarter it may. Most of the tribes are eminently subject to the influence and control of interested, unprincipled, and crafty individuals, who, to retain their influence and power, would oppose the idea of a consolidation of the tribes, because now they are something, while under the new order of things they might be nothing. They will pander to the prejudices of their people by preaching the sanctimoniousness of their separate creation, nationality, and customs, and claim that as their Creator made them, so they must ever remain. They flatter the pride of the Indian mind. Their reasoning is specious, but yet it is all sophistry.

To combat and overcome such influences the commission would have much labor to perform. It may be imagined that a serious obstacle would be presented to the removal of the Indians from their homes on account of the love they bear for the graves of their ancestors. This, indeed, would be the least and last objection that would be raised by any tribe. Much is said in the books about the reverence paid by Indians to the dead, and their antipathy to deserting their ancestral graves. Whatever may have been the customs for the dead in ages gone by, and whatever pilgrimages may have been made to the graves of their loved and distinguished dead, none of any consequence exists at the present day. They leave their dead without any painful regrets or the shedding of tears. And how could it be otherwise with a people who have such indefinite and vague ideas of a future state of existence, and to my mind it is unnatural to assume or suppose that the wild and untutored Indian can have more attachment for his home, or love for the graves of his ancestors, than the civilized and enlightened Christian.

The appointment of a number of reputable educated Indians upon this com-

mission is suggested because they are familiar with the best modes of communicating with the tribes, whether friendly or unfriendly; they are familiar with the peculiarities of the Indian mind, and know how to make the desired impression upon it, and it would add greatly to the confidence of the tribes in the earnestness, sincerity, and humanity of the government.

The commission shall be required to invite and hear all complaints from the Indians, transmit them verbatim to Washington, and communicate to the Indians the answers thereto. If the complaints be against any agent or citizen of the United States, such agent or citizen shall be furnished with a correct copy of the complaint, an answer thereto obtained, when all the papers in the case shall be sent to Washington, a prompt decision given upon the same, and returned to the commission for promulgation to the parties interested. In my opinion nothing could occur that would tend more strongly to advance the happiness of the Indians, and attach them firmly to the United States government, than the realization of the benefits of an impartial dispensation of justice among themselves and between them and the whites. It has been lately suggested that Indian agents be vested with magisterial powers to administer and dispense justice among the Indians, and between Indians and the whites. Such a plan does not seem to me practicable, because the agent would be absolutely powerless to enforce his judgments, not only against the Indians, but against the whites. If, however, the Indian business is retransferred to the military branch of the government, officers acting as Indian agents could act efficiently as magisterial officers, because they could always have troops to enforce their decrees, and such a measure I should deem very desirable, and I think would result in the greatest good in checking mischief, by summarily punishing lawlessness and crime, whether committed by whites or Indians.

Most of the tribes would have to be visited several times by the commission before the Indian mind would come to a conclusion upon the matters and things that might from time to time be submitted to them, and the government and people of the United States would be compelled to exercise the Christian virtue of patience, until the aboriginal mind was fully prepared and ripened to adopt the plans of the government, when general councils of tribes could be called and a permanent union or confederation of peace formed among themselves and the United States, and they be made to settle down upon lands within certain defined and permanent limits and bounds, where ample aid and protection could be easily and economically afforded them.

No suggestions have been made regarding the disposition of lands at present held or occupied by the tribes, or their annuities, or the amount and kind of aid they ought to receive when concentrated within defined districts, it being deemed premature to discuss such questions now, as circumstances and future legislation will probably better determine them.

This project, at first blush, may seem to be devised on too extensive a scale, and involving too much expense for an experiment. I cannot so regard it. On the contrary, I believe it to be more economical than any other plan that could be suggested. A whole army of Indian agents, traders, contractors, jobbers, and hangers-on would be dispensed with, and from them would come the strongest opposition to the adoption of this plan, as it would effectually close to them the corrupt sources of their wealth.

In 1865 the Secretary of the Interior estimated the cost to the government of maintaining each regiment of troops operating against the Indians on the frontier at two millions of dollars per annum, and that only a few hundred Indians had been killed. By a recent publication in the newspapers (but whether true or not I cannot say) it was stated that the cost of operations against the Indians during the past year was thirty millions of dollars; that a certain number only of Indians had been killed, each life costing the government sixty thousand dollars. Though the cost of carrying on a war is now



pretty well understood in this country, the expense of an Indian war extending along a frontier of thousands of miles cannot be safely estimated. The expense of the Florida Indian war, against a few Indians, who long refused to leave a country hardly inhabitable by civilized man, it is known, cost millions of treasure and many valuable lives.

The expense of this entire plan for establishing peace, saving lives, making every route of travel across the continent entirely safe, civilizing and perpetuating the Indian race, and developing immense tracts of country now held by hostile bands of Indians, would be but a mere tithe to the amount now annually paid by the government for these purposes. There are plenty of troops already in the Indian country, and after the commission has commenced its labors hostilities would very soon cease. Yet the military would have to be maintained in the country until the labors of the commission were fairly and fully developed, and, if successful, the troops could be moved into or contiguous to the Indian districts, to protect them from frauds and impositions, to maintain them in their just and legal rights, and to act as the magisterial agents of the government. The benefits to result from even a partial success of this plan would, to my mind, justify the government in attempting it, especially as it seems so much more economical than the prosecution of the present Indian policy.

E. S. PARKER.

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WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington City, January 28, 1867.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, for the consideration of the committee, a report on Indian affairs, of January 25, prepared by General John Pope, United States army.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

EDWIN M. STANTON,  
*Secretary of War.*

Hon. R. C. SCHENCK,  
*Chairman of Military Committee,  
House of Representatives.*

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WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 25, 1867.*

GENERAL: In compliance with your suggestions, I have the honor to submit the following leading reasons why the Indian bureau should be retransferred to the War Department. The views which I shall submit are by no means original, but are well-settled opinions of every officer of the army who has had experience of the subject, and are and have been entertained for years by nearly every citizen of the Territories not directly or indirectly connected with the present system of Indian management.

1. Under present circumstances there is a divided jurisdiction over Indian affairs. While the Indians are officially at peace, according to treaties negotiated with them by the civil officers of the Indian bureau, the military forces stationed in the Indian country have no jurisdiction over the Indians, and, of consequence, no certain knowledge of their feelings or purposes, and no power to take any action, either of a precautionary or aggressive character.

The first that is known of Indian hostilities is a sudden report that the Indians have commenced a war, and have devastated many miles of settlements, or massacred parties of emigrants or travellers. By the time such information reaches the military commander the worst has been accomplished, and the In-

dians have escaped from the scene of outrage. Nothing is left to the military except pursuit, and generally unavailing pursuit. The Indian agents are careful never to locate their agencies at the military posts, for reasons very well understood. It is not in human nature that two sets of officials, responsible to different heads, and not in accord either in opinion or purpose, should act together harmoniously; and instead of combined, there is very certain to be conflicting action. The results are what might be expected. It would be far better to devolve the whole management of Indians upon one or the other department, so as to secure at least consistent and uniform policy. At war, the Indians are under the control of the military; at peace, under the control of the civil officers. Exactly what constitutes Indian hostilities is not agreed on; and besides this, as soon as the military forces, after a hard campaign, conducted with great hardship and at large expense, have succeeded in forcing the Indians into such a position that punishment is possible, the Indian, seeing the result and the impossibility of avoiding it, immediately proclaims his wish to make peace. The Indian agent, anxious, for manifest reasons, to negotiate a treaty, at once interferes "to protect" (as he expresses it) the Indians from the troops, and arrests the further prosecution of the military expedition, just at the moment when results are to be obtained by it, and the whole labor and cost of the campaign are lost. The Indian makes a treaty to avoid immediate danger from the troops, without the slightest purpose of keeping it, and the agent knows very well that the Indian does not intend to observe it. While the army is fighting the Indians at one end of the line, Indian agents are making treaties and furnishing supplies at the other end, which supplies are at once used to keep up the conflict. With this divided jurisdiction and responsibility it is impossible to avoid these unfortunate transactions. If the Indian department as at present constituted were given sole jurisdiction of the Indians, and the troops removed, it is certain that a better condition of things would obtain than now exists, since the whole responsibility of Indian wars and their results to unprotected citizens would belong to the Indian bureau alone, without the power of shifting responsibility for consequences upon others. The military officer is the representative of force, a logic which the Indian understands, and with which he does not invest the Indian agent. It is a fact which can be easily authenticated that the Indians in mass prefer to deal entirely with military commanders, and would unanimously vote for the transfer of the Indian department to the War Department. In this they are mainly influenced by the knowledge that they can rely upon what the military commander tells or promises them, as they see he has power to fulfil his promise.

2. The first and great interest of the army officer is to preserve peace with the Indians. His home during his life is to be at some military post in the Indian country, and, aside from the obligations of duty, his own comfort and quiet, and the possibility of escaping arduous and harassing field service against Indians at all seasons of the year, accompanied by frequent changes of station, which render it impossible for him to have his family with him, render a state of peace with Indians the most desirable of all things to him. He therefore omits no proper precautions, and does not fail to use all proper means, by just treatment, honest distribution of annuities, and fair dealing, to secure quiet and friendly relations with the Indian tribes in his neighborhood. His honest distribution of the annuities appropriated to the Indians is further secured by his life commission in the army, and the odium which would blast his life and character by any dishonest act. If dismissed from the service for such malfeasance, he would be publicly branded by his own profession, and would be powerless to attribute his removal from office to any but the true cause. The Indian agent, on the other hand, accepts his office for a limited time and for a specific purpose, and he finds it easy when he has secured his ends (the rapid acquisition of money) to account for his removal from office on political grounds,

or the personal enmity of some other official of his department superior in rank to himself. The eagerness to secure an appointment as Indian agent, on a small salary, manifested by many persons of superior ability ought of itself to be a warning to Congress as to the objects sought by it. It is a common saying in the west that next to, if not indeed before, the consulship to Liverpool, an Indian agency is the most desirable office in the gift of the government. Of course the more treaties an Indian agent can negotiate the larger the appropriations of money and goods which pass through his hands and the more valuable his office. An Indian war every other day, with treaty making on intermediate days, would be, therefore, the condition of affairs most satisfactory to such Indian agents. I by no means mean to say that all Indian agents are dishonest. In truth I know some who are very sincere and honorable men, who try to administer their offices with fidelity to the government, but that the mass of Indian agents on the frontier are true only to their personal and pecuniary interests, I am very sure no one familiar with the subject will dispute.

I repeat, then, that a condition of peace with Indians is above all things desirable to the military officer stationed in their country; something very like the reverse to the Indian agent.

3. The transfer of the Indian bureau to the War Department would at once eliminate from our Indian system the formidable army of Indian superintendents, agents, sub-agents, special agents, jobbers, contractors, and hangers-on who now infest the frontier States and Territories, and save to the government annually a sum of money which I will not venture to estimate. The army officers detailed to perform duty in their places would receive no compensation in addition to their army pay. Previous to the creation of the Interior Department and the transfer of the Indian bureau to that department, army officers performed well and honestly the duties of Indian agents, and it is only necessary to refer to our past history to demonstrate that our relations at that time with the Indians were far more friendly and satisfactory than they have been since.

In conclusion, it is hardly necessary to repeat that no business was ever successfully conducted where there was a joint jurisdiction and a divided responsibility; nor can harmony under such circumstances ever be looked for, so long as human nature remains what it is. The military are absolutely necessary in the Indian country to protect the lives and property of our citizens. Indian agents and superintendents are not necessary, since their duties have been and can still be faithfully and efficiently performed by the army officers stationed with the troops. Harmonious and concerted action can never be secured while both parties are retained.

The military are necessary, the civil officers are not, and, as it is essential that the one or the other be displaced, I cannot see what doubt can exist as to which party must give way.

These are only the general reasons for the retransfer of the Indian bureau to the War Department, reasons which are well understood by every one familiar with the subject. Many others equally valid and much more in detail might be given, but perhaps those already set forth, and which command the general concurrence of everybody concerned, would seem to be sufficient.

Concerning the general policy to be pursued toward the Indian tribes, their restriction to reservations, the locations of such reservations and their management, together with the regulation of trade with them, I have so fully set forth my views in various communications to the Secretary of War and to yourself, which have from time to time been published by Congress, that I do not deem it necessary to repeat them here. In order that any policy whatever may be consistently and efficiently pursued, a change in our present administration of Indian affairs is absolutely essential. The retransfer of the Indian bureau to the War Department is believed to be the first step toward a reformation, and until that

step is taken it is useless to expect any improvement in the present condition of our Indian relations.

A reference to my communications on this subject for the past twelve months will exhibit the fact that I have repeatedly warned the government that the Indian war now upon us was inevitable, and that no reliance whatever could be placed upon treaties of peace such as had been negotiated. The peace commissioners promise the Indian, in the first place, that the whites shall not go into the Indian country, knowing well that it is impossible to fulfil such a promise. This is the first and most persistent demand of the Indian, a demand readily conceded but never executed. Other provisions are inserted in the treaty equally certain to remain unfulfilled. The Indian has lost all confidence in such promises, and only makes a treaty to secure the money and supplies which accompany it. In this unscrupulous manner treaties are made and violated on both sides, and in this manner they will continue to be made unless some change in our Indian system is effected.

While the policy of the government toward the Indian tribes is humane and liberal, so far as legal enactments are concerned, the mode of administering that policy has not only frustrated all the kind and benevolent intentions of the government, but has absolutely worked wrong and injustice, both to whites and Indians, which could not have occurred had there been no laws whatever on the subject.

I am, general, respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN POPE,

*Brevet Major General U. S. A.*

General U. S. GRANT,

*General-in-Chief, Washington, D. C.*

Official :

E. S. PARKER,

*Colonel and A. D. C.*

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Respectfully forwarded to the Secretary of War, with request that these copies be sent to the Military Committees of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and the Hon. Secretary of the Interior.

U. S. GRANT, *General.*

HEADQUARTERS ARMY, *January 27, 1867.*